

Newfoundland News

O'Brien Family Update

End of Year 2018

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! We trust you had a blessed Christmas season. We have had a very full schedule since the beginning of fall. In October, we were presented with an additional ministry opportunity. A missionary who was in the process of starting a church in Corner Brook (a town about 45 minutes away) had to return to the U.S. permanently. We began to pray about the Lord's will in regards to taking on the church plant in addition to the one here in Stephenville. God made it clear that this was exactly what He wanted us to do. Since mid-October we have been holding services in Corner Brook on Sunday evenings after our morning and afternoon services in Stephenville. We are also holding Thursday evening Bible studies there as well. For the Sunday service, we have been having about 5 people besides our family.

During October and November, we did more traveling than we are used to while on the field. Emily had a wonderful time at the music conference, and she enjoyed the much needed time of fellowship with several of the other pastor's wives from the island. Thankfully, she returned to a clean house and all three children accounted for. Donna, a lady from our church, was a great help to come and clean the house while I picked Emily up from the airport!

In November, I had the opportunity to help a church on the other side of the island in replacing their roof. It was a great time working with the other pastors and many laymen from the Baptist churches on the island. It was great to see a big job finished in such a short amount of time.

Later in November, our family attended the island's Pastor's fellowship and then the anniversary service of one of the churches on the other side of the island.

In December, we had our annual Christmas program on the 9th in Stephenville and the 16th in Corner Brook. This year we were able to put on a small play and have a few musical numbers. We stretched our small core group to the max with parts, choir music, props, and lights. We had no choice but to have Autumn (age 6) help with the lights. That was interesting! We all practiced for almost two months. Everyone did a tremendous job. The Lord blessed with 44 in attendance in Stephenville and 22 in Corner Brook. There were many first time visitors in both services and all those in attendance were very attentive to the Gospel message that was preached.

This year we had the opportunity to head south (Maine) for Christmas. Our plan was to spend Christmas with Emily's family for the first time in 7 years. Her family was to include her parents, her grandfather, and her sister's family. A couple of weeks before we left, we received a call that her grandfather had had a heart attack. Thankfully, he was home before we got there, and he has since been healing well and gaining strength. We are praising the Lord for allowing us more time with this godly, prayer warrior.

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The day we arrived in Maine, Emily's sister's family (the Northcutts) left to see Matt's father who was near death from Melanoma. We were not able to see the Northcutts until after Christmas. That was only because we had to extend our trip because of car trouble. With the scare of Emily's grandfather, the loss of Matt Northcutt's father, car repairs, injuries sledding, my father-in-law losing his vacation days and having to work without pay because of the government shut-down...the list could go on...nothing went as we had pictured our "perfect" Christmas would go. It could have been quite a depressing Christmas. I'm thankful that the week before we left the Lord brought me to Luke 2:19 – "And Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." As I thought on this phrase and what she pondered, I realized it wasn't the hardships, it wasn't who was there, and it wasn't what they didn't have that she pondered on. It was the miracle that had just occurred. It was the Saviour that she held in her arms. It was the fact that God was using her. Too many times we ponder on what is wrong instead of what is right. If all that we can find right is our Saviour, then, what more do we need? This applies for every day, for every problem (Philip. 4:6-9). We have many things for which to be thankful. One of them is your continued prayers and support. Thank you for another year of encouragement and help in the ministry.

Please keep the following things in prayer:

- The Northcutt family as they are grieving the loss of Barry, Matt's father, and the many things that need to be done for Matt's mother and the children still at home
- Matt and Katie Northcutt and family as they continue meetings on furlough
- The growth of New Hope Baptist Church in Stephenville by seeing lost saved and Christians to continue to grow
- The growth of Grace Baptist Church in Corner Brook (a city of 20,000) and the need of a pastor to come take this ministry and give it the full attention it needs
- Loretta Berkshire – an older Christian lady from the Corner Brook area with stage 4 cancer who has been given six months to live. Currently her chemo treatments are going well.

Your Fellow Servants,

Patrick, Emily, Courtney, Brooke and Autumn O'Brien